

Sermons on John 17 By Samuel Pierce,

SERMON 5.

Joh 17: 5

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

I conceive, from the plan of this most divine prayer, we should gather this instruction. To pray with a view, as keeping in memory, and expressing the order and economy of the divine Trinity, in all their acts of grace, and transactions in the everlasting covenant, on the behalf of the elect and beloved of God. We should attend more closely than we generally do, to our Lord's prayers, as recorded in the Word, and more especially to this before us, as it would greatly help us to understand what we are to pray for, and the ground on which we should rest our faith and hope in God, for the acceptance of our persons, and performances before the Lord. The whole of the foregoing verses are full of matter; they are most truly excellent; they are all closely linked, and so connected together that they form a chain of glorious truths, in which are contained the wisdom of God in a mystery. Not to go over the ground already trodden; I would say the words before me are the grand conclusion of the former verses. And here ends the first part of this prayer. The words now under consideration are the uttermost of Christ's heart, to his Father, for himself. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

I view this passage as one of the deepest in all the book of God. For as the mystery of the Trinity is one of the deepest which is, or could possibly be revealed, so next unto it the person of Christ must be the most profound. And, as I conceive, it is most gloriously set before us in the gospel, and is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in

the flesh. As without the doctrine of the Trinity, the truths recorded in the scriptures cannot be supported, so this great truth, concerning the personalities in Jehovah are most clearly expressed, in the incarnation of Christ. So that to a mind, spiritually enlightened, to know Christ, there cannot be clearer demonstration given of the person of the Father, and the distinctive personality of the Spirit, than is made known in the person of Christ, who is God-man, God in our nature, God dwelling personally in the man Christ Jesus. God with us. Whilst I consider all these expressions to be truly agreeable with scripture, and therefore perfectly safe to be used, and that no wrong idea can arise from them, yet I will say, next to the Trinity in unity, there is not a greater display of God in heaven or earth, than in the man Christ Jesus, who is here praying. He prays to the Father; he prays as God-man; he prays for himself; he prays for his own glorification; he prays this may be speedily. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. In which words we have these following particulars:

First, the pre-existence of Christ. He was before the world. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Secondly, He speaks of a glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

Thirdly, Our Lord prays now to be glorified. And now, O Father, glorify thou me, &c.

And lastly, That this may speedily take place. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

In going over these particulars, an attempt will be made to unfold the mystery of the person of Christ, God-man, and how he existed

before all worlds, and had a glory with the Father before the world was. Also, an inquiry will be made concerning what that glory was. And also what that glory is, in which he shines forth at the right hand of the Majesty on high. May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, be my guide, and the holy gospel, in which all this is revealed, be my rule, so as that it may tend to the honor of Christ, and your spiritual advantage, what I shall set before you concerning these most truly divine and heavenly subjects. And,

First, I shall speak concerning the pre-existence of Christ; it being held forth in our text. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory that I had with thee before the world was. If Christ had a glory with the Father, before the world was, he must have had an existence with the Father, before the world was. Then he pre-existed before his incarnation. Yet, as I mean, as the Lord shall graciously enable me, to enter clearly into this subject, I must proceed gradually and cautiously, so as that nothing be uttered which may weaken the foundation upon which all this rests. Christ is the Son of the living God. As such, he is personally distinct from the Father, yet of the same nature and godhead with the Father and the Spirit. As such, he existed with the Father and the Spirit in the incomprehensible Jehovah, as God over all, blessed for ever. As he pre-existed as the Son of God in his distinctive personality in godhead, as one with the Father, and the Spirit, so he had the glory of his self and co-equal existence, with the Father and the Spirit. Yet this cannot be conceived of. It being as vast, and incomprehensible as godhead. Therefore it must be here said, that as he existed as the Son of God, with the Father and Spirit, in the incommunicable Essence, so it was the will of the Father, himself, and Spirit, he should be predestinated to be God-man. He was essential Word, and the only begotten Son of God; and by the will of the Eternal Three, he was to be the image of the invisible God. The name, or title of image, says one, is not spoken of the essence of God, but hath a relation to us. So as, therefore, Christ is the image of God, because he makes, as it were, God visible to us. And yet Christ is of the same

essence with the Father, or he could not truly (and to the life) represent God to us. The divine and essential personality of the Son of God is the foundation of his being by the will and decree of the Trinity, God-man, and as such he had a glory with the Father before the world was. He pre-existed, as God-man, before his incarnation; wore the glory of God-man before all time. Not that his human soul then existed. No. But the person of the Son of God existed; he was with God, and was God. This divine person, says Doctor Goodwin, was by an act and decree of God's will, singled out to assume our nature, and to sustain the person of an head before God. Thus Christ, as God-man, as the Head of the whole election of grace, as the Father, the Husband, the Shepherd, the Redeemer, the Friend, the Surety, the Brother, the Representative of his people, had a covenant subsistence before God, he had a glory with God; and this was before the world was. He existed prior to his incarnation, as God-man elect. As such he was the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts. This is all I mean by the pre-existence of Christ. That the essential Son of God was set up by the Eternal Three, as God-man, from everlasting. As such, he was glorified, as being admitted to shine forth in such glory as became him who was God, and man in one Christ. All this is confirmed by our Lord's words now before us. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Having declared my views of the pre-existence of Christ, that he, as the only begotten Son of God, equal and co-essential with the Father and the Spirit, in the incomprehensible Jehovah, was set up as God-man, the image of the invisible God, the fellow of the Lord of Hosts, and as such, had a glory with the Father before the world was, so I again repeat it; I mean that he was set up in the whole of his person, as God united to man, yet without having assumed the humanity, or any part thereof; so I proceed with my text, and am now to speak to the next branch and division of it. Which is,

Secondly, Christ speaks of a glory which he had with the Father before the world was. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. As to the glory of Christ, what it is and consists in, must, as we are on this part of the subject, be inquired into. We are bold to say, from the scriptures of truth, that Christ hath a twofold glory. And it consists in a glory which belongs to his person, and also which belongs to him, as it respects his office as Mediator. Our Lord speaks here of a glory which he had with the Father before the world was. He prays to be glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Therefore, it follows, he had not now that glory. He was at this time, and during his incarnate state, divested of it; otherwise he could not, with any kind of propriety, have said, And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Consequently, it must follow, that he cannot be here speaking of his essential glory as the only begotten Son of God. He could no more lay aside his essential glory, than he could cease to be. He could not pray to be glorified as the Son of the living God, because he was the same in the self-existing essence with the Father, and the Spirit. He must, therefore, be here understood as speaking of his personal glory, as God-man, who, as such, and as made free in society of Trinity, had shone forth in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and was the first-born of all God's thoughts, purposes, counsels, and designs, whom the Lord had possessed in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. As the Son of God, predestinated to be man, and by the personal union of the man in God, the Son of God dwelt with all the fullness of godhead, so that God-man is the brightness of glory, the image of the invisible God, in whom all of God is revealed, and from whom all of God is communicated. He, as thus considered, had a personal Glory, in which he shone forth in heaven before the world began. This glory is such as can be in no other than in him, who is the only begotten Son of God, personally and essentially. And yet it is not the personal and essential glory of the only begotten Son of God, but it is the glory due to Christ, who is

the Son of the living God, as personally and essentially considered, as he dwells and is united to the man Christ Jesus. Which glory Christ, as God-man, wore in heaven from everlasting, and was glorified with, by the Holy Three before the world was. This glory was discovered in those appearances of the Lord's after the fall. We read the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day. Ge 3: 8. Which must be applied to an appearance of the second person, and that as God-man, he being as such the sent one, the acting person, the Mediator, to whom all judgment is committed. The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Joh 5: 22. He appeared and shone forth in a most wonderful display of his glory, as is recorded. Ex 24. Yet it could not be his essential glory. For he says of his essence, There shall no man see me and live. Ex 33: 20. They saw the God of Israel, and under his feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire stone, as as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. It was the God-man who thus appeared. The sapphire stone is of a sky-blue color. Under the feet of this glorious personage was a paved work, or sapphire stone cut in squares, and the splendor reflected from it, was as the body of heaven in clearness, as blue sky, as we may so say. It is added, also they saw God, and did eat and drink: most probably on sacrificial food. Now I consider this as a shine, a reflection of the same glory with which our Lord shone forth on the Mount. And I conceive all this to belong to him as God-man. He shone forth and gave a glimpse of his personal glory to Isaiah, who saw him in a vision, between the seraphim's in the Holy of Holies, who worshipped him with a thrice holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. See chapter 6: verses 1 to 3. He was seen, as God-man, by Ezekiel, who gives the following account thereof: And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it: from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were

the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about it. As the appearance of the bow, that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. Eze 1: 26-28. He appeared to Daniel as A man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. Chapter 10: 5, 6. Can there be any fairer opening these sacred accounts, than to apply them as shadows of the personal glory of Christ, God-man? I think not. It was not Christ in his essential, but Christ in his personal glory, who thus discovered himself. And he enlightened, if I may so say, all these appearances of himself before his incarnation, by what took place in his state of humiliation, when before Peter, James, and John, he was transfigured on the holy mount; when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light; when the disciples saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father; and hereby knew him to be the only begotten Son of God. Because such glory could be in none but him who was Jehovah's equal, the man of God's right hand. If I have opened the subject satisfactorily to any spiritual mind, I would give the whole glory to God. If I have not, I would refer them to the scriptures. Search them; they are they, which testify concerning Christ's essential and personal glory. And the personal glory of Christ is the godhead dwelling personally in the humanity, so that the personal glory of Christ is essential to the man in God, and incommunicable to all beside. He had the full enjoyment of it. It is his right by inheritance. Yet he cannot communicate it to any. A vision of him in his personal glory will be the essence of blessedness to all his saints in glory. He who lived as God-man, in the bosom of the Father, before the world was, and wore personal glory as God-man, elect, who in the appearance of which an account hath been given, was pleased to admit his saints into a knowledge of himself, as God-man, and was pleased in the fullness of time to become incarnate. And at his incarnation he laid aside his glory. He

had a right to have shone forth in it immediately, as soon as he set his foot on our world. But that he might accomplish salvation work he laid it aside. And now he hath as good a completed salvation work, he prays he may take it up again, and shine forth with the Father as he had before. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I think I have given you the genuine meaning of our Lord's words, respecting the glory designed. Not but Christ hath an acquired glory, and which he had bestowed on him by the Father, in consequence of his work of mediation. He wears in heaven the glory of all his offices. He shines forth in glory as the Lamb slain. Yet I conceive it is his personal glory is what he most chiefly regards here. And therefore I will content myself with adding to this head, and then close it, that like as all transacted within the Holy of Holies, between God and Jesus Christ, was set forth in type, figure, promise, and prophecy, most exactly as it was stated in the infinite mind of Jehovah, and as it came to pass, so the primordial, ancient, personal, native, and inherent glories of Christ, God-man, were also here and there discovered to saints under the Old Testament dispensation. And it becomes us to search into these revealed and inspired records; to the intent we may see the exceeding great love of our Jesus, who though he was rich, yet for your sakes (says Paul) he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 2Co 8: 9.

I pass on, Thirdly, To notice our Lord prays to be glorified. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. As I have endeavored to declare the personal glory of Christ, and have aimed to show the glory which he had with the Father, before the world was; so under this present head, it will be a part of it to show what that glory is, in which he shines forth at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It should be kept in view; our Jesus addresses his Father just as he began. It was then, Father. It is now, O Father. All the difference is, an emphasis in the address by way of importunity. Yet I shall not dwell on it here, because it will more fitly come under consideration

in the closing head of this subject. Our Lord had been in his incarnate state, living like a prince in disguise. He had voluntarily emptied himself, and in his state of humiliation wrought out and completed the whole work for which he came from God. It is therefore his request to be glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. To sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, and to shine forth in all his native, personal, and ancient splendor, before saints and angels, to their everlasting joy and satisfaction. Whilst this must be included, and not excluded as a part of Christ's glorification; yet it is not the essence, and subject of what our Lord is here praying for. No. He has not as yet put up one petition for his church. It is all hitherto for himself. And the utmost of Christ's request, in the words before us, is for his own personal glorification. And the very essence of that is expressed, as consisting in peculiar intimacy and fellowship with the Father. Glorify thou me with thine own self. Let me be taken up into the mount of personal communion with thee. As thou didst admit me into all thy vast designs in me, as the center of all thy manifestative glory, and didst solace thy mind in me, as the object of thine ineffable love and complacency. As thou didst send me into the world that thou mightest glorify thy name, and hast testified thy delight in my person and work, and hast glorified me on the mount of transfiguration, by a voice from the excellent glory, so glorify me by raising me up to that infinite pinnacle of glory, thy bosom; there to solace myself in thee, and for thee there, to solace thyself in me, just as we have before done. Nothing short of this is the spirit of the request. So that here the human soul of Christ, in union with the person of the Son of God, prays on earth for the uttermost which could be enjoyed by the God-man in heaven. Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Let me be admitted into all those converses with thee which will be an infinite spring of mutual solace and delight. Draw the curtain from between me, and thyself. O Father, glorify me with thy own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Let me be admitted to the glory

which I had with thee, in all thy love, delight, counsel, covenant, and glory. Father glorify me with thine own self. The God-man shines forth at the right hand of the Majesty on high, in his personal glory, royalty, fullness, and perfections, as God in our nature; as the Father's beloved; as the church's beloved; as the head of his body, the church; as the Savior of it; as the Great High-Priest. Jesus is glorified in the same nature in which he was debased; he is glorified in his person; he is glorified in his work; he is glorified in his offices. His name is the word of God. In him all fullness dwells. He is Lord of all. Angels, principalities, and powers are made subject unto him. The glory in which he shines forth now in heaven, was showed forth in a beam of it, when he was transfigured. At which time Peter says, We were eye-witnesses of his majesty. 2Pe 1: 16. For he received from God, the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 2Pe 1: 17. The glory in which Christ then shone forth was his personal glory. Yet he shines forth in heaven to a greater degree of it, in majesty and splendor than he then did. Yet as he then shone forth, those who were eye-witnesses of it, saw, and knew it was glory which could dwell in no other person than he who was the only begotten Son of God. By the shine of his personal glory then, he gave evidence of the glory in which he will appear at his second coming. And this his personal glory is native, and inherent in him. He did not, he cannot be divested of it. He was not in his incarnate state. Yet he suspended the shine of it, which showed his transcendent grace. He could not have obeyed, suffered, and died, had he appeared in his glory; therefore, though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him. Php 2: 6-9. We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. Heb 2: 9. And this brings me,

Lastly, to show it was our Lord's request that his glorification should speedily take place. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

This will most easily appear by reviewing these words in their connection with the former. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

As I have glorified thee on the earth to the uttermost, so do thou glorify me in heaven. Glorify thou me with thine own self, by admitting me into all that solace, glory, and blessedness which I had in and with thee from everlasting. Glorify thou me with thine own self. There is a greatness and depth here. But nothing short of this will content Christ. Glorify thou me. What a full proof is here of the divine personality of the Father! He is the person in godhead who is here addressed. If one person in deity is properly acknowledged, all the other must necessarily be included. Therefore, John says, whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 2Jo 9. If the person of the Son be denied, the person of the Father cannot be denied. And if the personalities of the Father, and the Son, be truly and properly acknowledged, the person of the Holy Spirit must be acknowledged also. As the doctrine of the Three in Jehovah, are so in union one with the other, that in every act of grace they are all revealed, though not always expressed. Christ is here praying for his own immediate glorification; and for the glorification of his person, as God-man, now immediately. And now, O Father, glorify thou me. Let there be no delay; let me be received up into glory immediately, as soon as I have completed thy vast designs in my mediatory work; let me shine forth before thee in the same glory in which I ever did from before all time. We learn from hence the heart of Christ. What it was set upon. As his end in

the whole he had wrought and finished in his incarnate state, was to bring manifestative glory to his Father, so what kept up his great mind, in the immediate prospect of his immense sorrows, which he was to sustain, when the Father's wrath should come down upon his spotless humanity, was the views of the glory which should succeed this. O what a depth is there in this subject! Such as I cannot reach. No. Nor shall I be able to fully comprehend it in heaven to eternity. I cannot open the life, the love, the blessedness, the glory, the God-man lived and enjoyed in the bosom of the Father before all worlds. I cannot set forth the grace of his mysterious incarnation, the love he manifested, the life he lived, the obedience which he performed, the worth of his sacrifice, the immensity of his sufferings, in his state of humiliation. No. The subject is too vast; it is infinite; there is a sense in which it may be said it is incomprehensible. It is a subject known, believed, received, and enjoyed in the minds of all believers; yet it cannot be fully comprehended by them; nor will it ever be. A light let in upon the mind, from the Word and by the Spirit, is a mean whereby we see and apprehend Christ. And a real believing view of Christ, draws the whole soul after him. And a view of Christ, by sense and vision in glory, will swallow up the whole mind in one perpetual act of wonder and admiration. So that his person, as God-man, will be the ordinance of glory. Yet none will ever fully comprehend him, so as it respects the life and glory he lives and shines forth now in, as God-man, Mediator, we can have no adequate ideas of. Much less can we conceive of his personal glory. On it his heart was so set, with the fellowship and felicity he would partake of in being glorified with the Father, that he says, let there be no delay; let me have speedy admission. And now, O Father, glorify thou me. Here is much weight and emphasis in every word. And now, O Father, glorify thou me. Let me shine forth in my native inherent glory. I am thy co-equal Son. It is my person united to the man whom I have taken into union, gives everlasting worth, dignity, and excellency to him. Glorify me, my whole person God-man, now immediately, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. As it respects the glorifying the person

of Christ, it must here mean the acquitting him from all the sins of his people; the raising him up from earth to heaven; the exalting him above all blessing and praise; the fully investing him with all the prerogatives, titles, glories, and dignities due unto him, as the one Mediator, the heir of all things, in whom all fullness dwells, who is head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him which filleth all in all. I would again observe, Christ in this prayer for himself, contained in these five verses, prays thrice for his being glorified. First, in the first and second verses. Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And here a second time, in verse five, he prays to be glorified, saying, And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. It follows, from a due consideration of these verses, that there is a twofold glory included in them. He speaks, in the first verse, of being glorified; and speaks of it in relation to the work and performance of his office as Mediator, which he says lay in this, To give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. So that our Lord's prayer, Glorify me, that I may glorify thee, verse 1, is, that in the work of suffering which he was then entering upon, the Father would gloriously assist him, and enable him to go through with it, according to the commission, authority, and power the Father had given him. For in that sense Power, in verse 2, must be necessarily understood. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, to this end, That he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. All this properly relates to the work and office of Mediatorship. The as imports that in a proportion requisite to that work and office, which he was empowered and authorized with all, the Father would give him a measure of glorious grace and strength answerable, or worthy of that office, and fully enable him to perform it, and thoroughly to execute it; and then glorify him, by giving him a reward for that work which he should have finished, verse 4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work

which thou gavest me to do. All this is distinct from the glory mentioned in our text. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. This glory is the glory of God himself. And what it became to God to glorify such a one with, as was his Son, and to be taken up into the glory of God. It was not upon the account of what he had done in this world, as in relation to us, and our eternal life, but what simply arose from the union, and communion which he had, and was to have entirely with his Father, purely and alone, Glorify thou me with thine own self. It is the glory which the human nature hath in God, and with God alone, in the enjoyment of all that God is. As if he had said, Father, let the glory which is thine be mine; make me glorious with the glory thou hast thyself, with a glory from thee, and with a glory in thee. The glory our Lord here prays for, is the glory belonging to his person, as constituted God-man, which was to break forth in and upon the man assumed, as being one person with the Son, who is God essentially. Thus I have endeavored to do my best in setting forth this great subject before us. I have aimed to show, or rather to give hints, that Christ hath an essential glory, as the only-begotten Son of God; that he hath a personal glory, as God and man in one person; that he also hath a mediatory glory. And I have endeavored to give a distinction between his mediatory and personal glory, by observing that he prays for both these in this short prayer for himself, which is contained in these five verses. And that he closes it with asking for, and soaring up, to the highest and supreme pinnacle of glory. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. And thus having gone briefly through all the parts of Christ's prayer on his own behalf, and for himself, I close. Praying the Lord himself to pardon every deficiency; to shed his heavenly influences on it, so far as it may be a means to cast any light on the renewed mind, and give a blessed idea of the glory of Christ's person thereby. And thus I cast it into the treasury, and commit it to the care and blessing of the Lord the Spirit. Amen.